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ABSTRACT

Amos Kendall's place in journalism history rests largely on his service as a journalist turned government official in the two administrations of President Andrew Jackson. Historians have claimed that Kendall was an influential journalist of the "partisan press" era, but they have provided little documentation. That documentation has been provided through an examination of events leading up to Jackson's election of 1828. The performance of Amos Kendall as newspaper editor of the "Argus of Western America" (Frankford, Kentucky) during the elections of 1824 and 1828 reveals the following: (1) Henry Clay's early patronage of Amos Kendall meant that, although the two men had different political philosophies, Kendall actually supported Clay and John Quincy Adams against Jackson in 1824. (2) Clay's financial pressures on Kendall helped cause the latter to switch his political allegiance to Jackson in 1827. (3) In 1828 Kendall helped ensnare the Adams-Clay coalition in politically embarrassing situations by revealing some of his own surreptitious maneuverings against Clay's opponents when he had been "in the service" of Clay. (RL)

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AMOS KENDALL'S ROLE IN THE ELECTION OF ANDREW JACKSON AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, 1828

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AMOS KENDALL'S ROLE IN THE ELECTION OF ANDREW JACKSON
AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, 1828

The presidential election of 1828 was a bitterly fought rematch between incumbent John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. In 1824 Jackson had received the largest number of popular votes in a four-candidate race, but he lacked a majority in the Electoral College. The House of Representatives subsequently awarded Adams the presidency when Henry Clay, who had finished fourth in the election, threw his support to Adams.

"Old Hickory's" triumph over the Adams-Clay coalition in 1828 was accomplished with the help of a nationwide network of newspapers, composed of existing Jacksonian papers and a number of new journals created specifically to propagandize for Jackson. The new president gave government jobs to a number of editors who he felt had argued effectively for his election. Among these journalists was Amos Kendall, editor of the Argus of Western America, Frankfort, Kentucky.

Initially fourth auditor of the treasury, Kendall became, with fellow journalists Francis Preston Blair and John C. Rives, a member of Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet," which exerted great influence over the shaping of executive policy. Furthermore, as a founder and editorial writer for the Globe, the official administration newspaper, Kendall acquired a reputation as a kind of presidential press secretary and media "image-maker," although these jobs did not exist as such at the time. Finally, as postmaster general in Jackson's second term in office, Kendall supported his chief executive's stand in favor of slave-holders by attempting to ban pro-abolition newspapers from the mails.

Journalism histories have remembered Kendall chiefly for these things--for his governmental service as a former journalist. But in recognizing Kendall as a noteworthy journalist of the "partisan press" era, these histories have said little about what Kendall's Argus actually did to help elect Jackson in the first instance. Tebbel, for example, calls the Argus the "chief newspaper support" for Jackson, though he cites no examples of its content;[1]

and the Emerys go even farther, contending that the newspaper was "the party voice of the entire [Western] region."[2] Similar claims, generally undocumented, are stated in several general histories of the period.[3] Thus, a fuller examination of Kendall's service to Jackson's cause, in the context of events leading up to the election of 1828, is required for an analysis of the alleged influence of the Argus on the outcome of that election.

This paper will examine the performance of the Argus in the elections of 1824 and 1828. Specifically, it will show (1) that Clay's early patronage of Kendall meant that, although the two men had different political philosophies, Kendall actually supported Clay and Adams against Jackson in 1824; (2) that Clay's financial pressures on Kendall helped cause the latter to switch his political allegiance to Jackson in 1827; and (3) that in 1828 Kendall helped ensnare the Adams-Clay coalition in politically embarrassing situations by revealing some of his own surreptitious maneuverings against Clay's opponents when he had been "in the service" of Clay.

* * * *

When Kendall first arrived in Lexington, Kentucky, in the spring of 1814, a 24-year-old Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dartmouth College, he became live-in tutor to the five children of Henry Clay.[4] The two men became friends when Clay returned home in 1816 after having served as a member of the United States Peace Commission that negotiated the end to the War of 1812.[5]

Kendall had originally aspired to be a lawyer,[6] but in 1816 Col. Richard M. Johnson persuaded him to enter journalism as editor of the Georgetown Patriot. Johnson, a leading states' rights advocate in Kentucky politics, opposed the establishment of a federal banking system and recognized in Kendall the writing talent to oppose this imposition of federal sovereignty over the states.[7] Kendall editorialized often about banking

and currency in the Patriot and the Minerva, both short-lived newspapers in Georgetown; but he apparently felt free to disagree with Johnson about editorial positions, claiming, "I will not be his tool."[8]

Then in the fall of 1816 Clay loaned Kendall $1,500 to buy a half-interest in the Argus of Western America.[9] Clay was a nationalist who advocated a central government actively engaged in assisting the country's economic growth. He sought protective tariffs, internal improvements, stable currency, distribution of federal surpluses to the states and a sound banking system.[10] Clay worked to get a federal branch bank established in Lexington in 1816, and he eventually became a director of the state's central bank.[11] As speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, Clay was a regional political hero--especially to the burgeoning business interests of the West--and he was seen as a future presidential candidate.

Kendall was aware of Clay's role in the national bank, but he kept Clay's name out of his banking discussions in the Argus not only because of his financial indebtedness to Clay and because of his respect for Clay's congressional stature: he further felt indebted to Mrs. Clay for having nursed him through a severe illness in early 1816.[12]

In its first years of operation, the new national bank loaned freely in the Western states; but its vaults soon became filled with the various state paper currencies, not backed by specie, of thousands of borrowers. In 1818 the bank began to collect its debts by confiscating real estate and other tangibles--with a heavy hand when necessary. Although these collections were necessary for the bank to sustain itself, they contributed to the depression of 1819. Its confiscatory policies earned the bank the name of "monster" in the "debtor class."[13]

As a relief measure, the Kentucky legislature tried to impose a tax on the federal branch banks in the state.[14] But the 1819 McCulloch v. Maryland

decision by the Supreme Court of the United States affirmed the constitutionality of the bank and forbade the states to tax it.

In March 1819 Kendall published a series of 11 articles in the Argus, condemning the McCulloch decision. In one of the articles, he wrote:

> Let us guard against the doctrine of implied powers.... [T]he establishment of a national bank is as nothing compared with the powers which may be exercised under the protecting wing of this decision. The mind is lost in the confused multitude of implications...which may hereafter assume a form and substance as terrible to the government of the States as they are now unexpected in the minds of the people....Instead of turning bankers, let Congress confine themselves to the powers delegated in the Constitution, and the means which tend exclusively to their execution.[15]

Perhaps unknown to Kendall, Clay himself had fallen increasingly into debt, until he owed about $40,000, most of it to the United States Bank.[16] In order to extricate himself from debt, Clay increased his private legal practice--and his chief client was the United States Bank. He won a number of lawsuits against debtors in several states, some of whom lost their property to the bank.[17] Clay had an overarching reason for wanting to resolve his financial problems: he intended to run for president in 1824.

By 1822 several sectional candidates seemed likely to oppose each other for the presidency. John Quincy Adams, secretary of state to President James Monroe, was the New England candidate; John C. Calhoun, secretary of war, and William H. Crawford, secretary of the treasury, were the Southern contenders; and Clay and Andrew Jackson were candidates of the West.[18] Anticipating that none of the candidates would receive a majority of the electoral votes, Clay began looking for ways to gain support in other states. If he could have been one of the three top vote-getters, his popularity in the House of Representatives quite possibly could have made him president. Clay felt he could gain support in the West and hurt Adams in that section if their respective roles in the Treaty of Ghent negotiations could be recalled to the

electorate. One of the critical aspects of these negotiations had been Adams' willingness, Clay's protest notwithstanding, to allow British ships to navigate the Mississippi River in return for the right of New England fishermen to continue to use Newfoundland fisheries under British control.[19]

In 1822 and 1823 the Argus published a series of letters, under the name "Wayne," attacking Adams' behavior as representing hostility to the interests of the West. It is not certain either that Kendall was the author of the letters--the actual writers of articles seldom signed their names to their work in this era of journalism--or that Clay caused them to be written and published.[20] But Clay did give $100 to a printer named William Tanner for the publication of a pamphlet edited by Kendall, containing all the charges in the "Wayne" letters;[21] these pamphlets were then distributed in Ohio.[22]

Overtly, Kendall was a staunch supporter of Clay's candidacy. In one article he looked with disdain on the efforts of supporters of other candidates in Kentucky, some of whom suggested that the state would be throwing away its electoral votes if it backed Clay.[23]

> The idea that any other candidates for electors can succeed in Kentucky except those who are pledged to support Mr. Clay is to us so utterly chimerical that we can look on their annunciation as intended, in the general, for no other purpose than to produce effect abroad by keeping up appearance of division at home.[24]

Meanwhile, Kendall's opposition to federal sovereignty was making increasingly incongruous his support of the vision of a strong central government that was the basis of the Clay presidential platform. Kentucky "relief" politicians dominated the state legislature and the governorship from 1820 to 1824. Among their activities was the passage of a replevin law which prevented creditors from executing judgments against debtors for from one to two years.[25] But three different Kentucky courts declared the replevin

law unconstitutional; thus, the courts became identified by the relief forces as enemies of poor debtors, champions of the "creditor class" and allies of the federal government in its encroachments on states' rights.[26] Kendall became one of the advisers and "ghostwriters" for a political campaign which sought the removal of three state appeals court judges whose striking-down of the replevin law had denied "the will of the majority of people."[27]

Clay, though privately opposed to the relief faction, did not become actively involved in the controversy. Not willing to risk a rift in his home-state base of support for the presidency, he stayed mostly in Washington, attending to his congressional duties. But as early as 1822 Kendall warned him that the relief faction was very jealous of him.[28]

In the 1824 presidential election Jackson led with 99 electoral votes, Adams took 84 and Crawford--who had refused to withdraw after having suffered a paralytic stroke in 1823--won 41. Clay carried only Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio.[29] The House of Representatives was to elect the new president on Feb. 9, 1825.

Many of Clay's supporters for president in Kentucky had also favored relief; with Clay eliminated from the race, most of them quickly decided to support Jackson.[30] But Kendall was not among them. Instead, at Clay's urging, he wrote letters in support of Adams to the Kentucky delegation in the U. S. House.[31]

Clay and Jackson had been political antagonists for years. In terms of his own ambition, Clay had little to gain by supporting a fellow Westerner for president. Adams' assets, in Clay's view, were his long-term government service, his general agreement with Clay on foreign and domestic policy, and the possibility that in future elections New England would remember Clay's support of that section's favorite son.[32] On Jan. 8, 1825, Clay sent a private letter to Francis Preston Blair, contributor to the Argus, indicating

he would support Adams as "a choice of evils."[33] Four years later, the letter was to become a campaign issue in Kentucky, because it was sent one day before Clay and Adams met in Adams' library to discuss, according to Adams, "some principles of great public importance."[34] There is no evidence that any bargain was struck between the two men at the meeting. But soon thereafter Clay and his supporters began to lobby, behind the scenes, for Adams in the various state delegations of the House.

In the final weeks before the election, a last-minute attempt to forge a Jackson-Crawford coalition fell through when the doctrinaire Crawford faction would not go along.[35] Jackson was also approached by Rep. James Buchanan of Pennsylvania about a possible deal with Clay, although it is clear Buchanan was not authorized to do so by Clay.[36] This incident ironically was also to be used to damage Clay's integrity by friends of Jackson in 1828.

On Feb. 9 Adams was elected president with the vote of 13 state delegations to seven for Jackson and four for Crawford. Eight of Kentucky's 12 representatives, ignoring a Jan. 11 resolution by the Kentucky legislature asking them to vote for Jackson, voted for Adams.[37] The Jackson forces, including the general himself, took the defeat with apparent grace and calm.[38] But on Feb. 12, when Adams announced that he had offered to make Clay secretary of state--which in that era was considered the springboard position to the presidency[39]--the Jacksonians exploded, charging "corrupt bargain and intrigue" between Adams and Clay. And when Clay accepted the position on Feb. 20, Jackson was able to declare, "The Judas of the West has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver."[40] The accusation was not to fade away in the coming years.

The reaction in Kentucky has been reported in various ways. Clay was burned in effigy by Jackson supporters.[41] The Niles Weekly Register printed

a letter describing Frankfort citizens surrounding Jackson's carriage to hear "Old Hickory" charge that "the people [have] been cheated....Corruption and intrigues in Washington...defeated the will of the people."[42] Kendall wrote Clay that "passion is taking the place of reason and you have little conception of the ferocious feelings." Kendall advised his patron to attempt no explanations, to emulate the Argus and keep still. "Even your voice would have little influence...and you might do yourself...much harm."[43] In contrast, Kerr cites a number of celebrations, parades and other gatherings of Kentuckians who greeted Clay when he next returned from Washington and travelled across the state to his Ashland home.[44]

During the months of intense presidential electioneering, events in Kentucky politics had been pushing Kendall further toward an eventual break with Clay. In January 1825 the Kentucky relief legislators, having failed to obtain a two-thirds majority vote to oust the appeals court judges, pushed through a reorganization act which established a separate court of appeals--the "New Court."[45] Blair and Kendall each wrote several pamphlets defending the establishment of the "New Court" and attacking the "Old Court" judges, and the Argus consistently supported the "New Court" in its columns.[46] But the "Old Court" judges refused to resign, so that for the next two years the state's legal system was largely paralyzed by the existence of two separate courts, each trying cases and claiming legitimacy.[47] For his efforts in behalf of the "New Court," Kendall earned both the respect and scorn of his opponents. (One anti-"New Court" handbill described him as "a renegado blue light federalist from Boston...very cunning, ingenious and artful; he was trained to his business by the tories of Boston, and will write and swear to any man or creed for money."[48])

Simultaneously, a statewide organization for Jackson was beginning to form in anticipation of a campaign against Adams' re-election in 1828.

Clay knew of the pressures on Kendall to join the Jackson party, and he realized that a Kendall employed against the administration could do it much harm. He also knew that Kendall wanted a government job, not too laborious but well paying, so that he could "sport my pen as I pleased."[49] The editor wrote Clay that "Employed in the administration, I should certainly not write against it, and I should take pride in vindicating you from the aspersions with which your enemies would overwhelm you." He asserted that he had no particular fondness for Jackson and would as soon support Adams as Jackson.[50] In early 1825 Clay and Kendall in a series of letters discussed the possibility of a job for Kendall as a State Department clerk; but the position Clay offered paid $1,000, and Kendall, who wanted $1,500, refused. Finally Clay broke off the negotiations, saying he had no job to offer at that wage.[51] Moreover, Clay demanded repayment of the $1,500 loan with which Kendall had bought into the Argus nine years before.[52] Kendall could not pay, and he asked for and received an extension of time, with the interest continued at the same rate. When Kendall defaulted again at the end of the grace period, Clay began legal proceedings against him.[53]

Three other factors of a financial nature stand out in Kendall's break with Clay. First, in 1826 Gov. Joseph Desha, a "New Court" and Jackson man, told the financially hard-pressed editor that unless the Argus could become "the thoroughgoing Jackson paper" the party wanted in Frankfort, he would finance a new paper to compete with the Argus.[54] Kendall knew such competition would be potentially ruinous, but he apparently was still torn by loyalty to Clay: he wrote Desha that "the interest and feelings of Clay and Adams were so completely identified that one could not be struck without the other feeling the effects of the blow."[55] In October the Argus began to attack Adams but not Clay. Clay responded by using his power as secretary of state

to designate private printers as publishers of government laws and notices; he took away about $100 worth of printing business from the Argus and gave it to a competitor.[56] The decision must have seemed like petty revenge to Kendall. Finally, threatened by Clay's lawsuit seeking repayment of the 1816 loan, Kendall found a savior in Martin Van Buren of New York, who functioned as unofficial treasurer of the Jackson party.[57] Bearing a letter from Richard M. Johnson requesting a loan of $2,000 to $3,000, Kendall told Van Buren that if the money were advanced, "you will confer on me a favor which will never be forgotten."[58] Van Buren provided the money. From Jan. 10, 1827, until the end of the campaign, the Argus was bitterly anti-Clay. (An early example of its treatment of Clay appeared on Jan. 24, 1827, when it quoted toasts offered at a Jackson meeting in Paris, Kentucky: "The Administration--foisted on the people contrary to their wishes, dying while it lives. No cheer, no guns. Henry Clay--Kentucky mourns his loss as a mother weeps for her first born, while his captors exult in the prize. 3 groans.")

Adams' appointment of Clay as secretary of state and the latitudinarian philosophy of his first annual message to Congress in December 1825--in which he "proposed a program of public works and improvements that revealed in each word his own intense nationalism and his personal commitment to Henry Clay's American System"[59]--provided reasons for Jacksonians and "Radical Republicans" throughout the country to form an anti-administration "combination" which was formalized in early 1827. From its national leaders--such as Van Buren, Thomas Ritchie, and Vice President Calhoun--down to the organizers of township committees in the states, the Jackson supporters, in the opinion of several historians,[60] were better professional politicians than the Adams men--better at organizing local, county and state committees; at popular

campaigning; at raising money; at communicating with and assisting each other across state lines; at propagandizing.

Jackson himself was the first presidential candidate to engage actively and publicly in his own campaign,[61] operating through correspondence committees in the states, newspaper editors, congressional leaders and his own Central Committee in Nashville. He made few public appearances, never offered a comprehensive national program, and in fact answered evasively to many questions about specific issues.[62] (Indeed, agreement on a range of policy issues may have been impossible for the Jacksonians to obtain, inasmuch as ousting Adams had been the only rationale for alliance for many of those in the "combination.")

The establishment of a nationwide newspaper system for Jackson has been called the single most important accomplishment of his supporters in Congress and in the states.[63] From New England to the South and through Lexington to the West, as the editors recognized each other's political preferences, they formed this network by exchanging articles, tips and other information. In their papers much "news" consisted of letters to the editor and of correspondence between politicians, government officials and citizens; at times these letters were accompanied by editorial commentary. As from the beginning of the American press, editors who received copies of friendly and opposition papers felt free to clip from these papers and to insert the "borrowed" articles into their own papers, sometimes by affixing "head and tail" explanatory paragraphs, sometimes not at all acknowledging the original source.

Jackson's newspaper network included Duff Green's United States Telegraph, which was to become the official administration newspaper in the early years of Jackson's first presidential term; the Richmond Enquirer (edited by Thomas Ritchie); the Albany (N.Y.) Argus; the New Hampshire Patriot; the Boston Statesman; the New York Courier, Inquirer and Evening Post; the Nash-

ville Republican; the Baltimore Republican; the Philadelphia Palladium; the Charleston Mercury; and the Argus of Western America.[64] These papers were supplemented by books, pamphlets, addresses, biographies and handbills.[65]

Kendall and Blair, in addition to their journalistic support of Jackson, actively engaged in the organizing efforts of their party. As early as February 1827 Jackson had been advised that an elaborate statewide committee system, modeled on one used in Jefferson County, Kentucky, in 1826, "had been commenced by your friends...with a view not only to your elevation, but likewise the resuscitation and success, of our local Republican cause."[66] In May the Argus carried a report of a citizens' assembly in Frankfort, which appointed a committee to cooperate with Jackson committees in Kentucky, Ohio and other states. Advocating direct election of the president by the people and adopting the slogan of "Jackson and Reform," the committee pledged to "oppose, by all honorable means in our power, the re-election of John Quincy Adams."[67] From July to December the Argus published accounts of Jackson dinners, barbecues and other meetings held in every county in the state, some of them organized by Kendall and Blair. The Jackson leaders were organizing for a state convention to be held in early 1828. These meetings were an important part of the plans to work up excitement and create sentiment favorable to Jackson.[68]

As dozens of county conventions began meeting in the fall, both parties selecting delegates to their state conventions, the Argus wrote:

> In Kentucky the prevailing anxiety which is felt on the national question has already obliterated in great measure the distinctions of the state parties, which but a year ago seemed calculated to produce divisions among a people once almost unanimously devoted to the support of the republican principles which triumphed under the auspices of Mr. Jefferson over the feudal aristocracy headed by the elder Adams.[69]

A pro-administration convention, meeting Dec. 17 to 19, 1827, in Frankfort, endorsed Adams for re-election. A Jackson convention, meeting in the same city on the thirteenth anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, approved a ticket of Jackson for president and Calhoun for vice president.[70]

The newspapers in the Jackson press system, in seeking to damage their opponent's image, had the apparent advantage of the aforementioned closer working relationship with their state political organizations. Once an editorial strategy had evolved, the individual papers in the system tended to operate in a "lockstep" fashion.[71] Two examples of this systematic press function, in which Kendall's Argus participated in an attempt to depict Adams as an arrogant and depraved aristocrat, will be illustrative.

In the first instance, in late 1826 the president was accused of having used money from a congressional appropriation for Executive Mansion furnishings to buy "a billiard table, balls, cues, backgammon board, dice, chess, and soda water" for the East Room. Thomas Hart Benton, a staunch Jackson supporter, wrote an anonymous letter to the Richmond Enquirer in which he claimed that $25,000 of public money had been used to purchase this "gambling equipment."[72] Kendall developed the issue in the Argus of Jan. 17, 1827, charging Adams with living in "undemocratic luxury." As the charges were restated in the Jackson newspapers, the state organizations began to urge their representatives to investigate Adams' personal finances. The actual cost of the East Room furnishings ($61 for the billiard table and $23.50 for the ivory chessmen[73]) had been paid out of Adams' pocket; but even after this fact had been revealed, the Jackson press continued to flail away at the issue.[74]

In the second instance, Isaac Hill of the New Hampshire Patriot had printed a short campaign biography of Jackson in which Hill claimed that Adams, as United States minister to Russia, had attempted to prostitute

his young son's nursemaid to Tsar Alexander; Adams had done so, Hill alleged, in order to gain influence at the Russian court. Adams had done no such thing,[75] but his denials were buried under the Jacksonians' blasts at the "Pimp of the Coalition." In two Argus articles (March 14 and April 4, 1827) this situation was mentioned as part of a review of Adams' diplomatic performance that focused on his opposition to the Louisiana Purchase and on his alleged padding of expense accounts in foreign state visits.

Such charges were useful to Jackson image-makers in constructing the contrast between Jackson--"Old Hickory," the military hero, the agrarian self-made man--and Adams--the sour-faced intellectual, the advocate of big government, the representative of the traditional moneyed ruling class. Jacksonians in Kentucky imputed to Adams monarchical ambitions and an insensitivity to the interests of the West. For example, in a speech reported in the Argus on Aug. 22, 1827, gubernatorial aspirant William T. Barry, a "New Court" and Jackson man, said:

> See the youthful Adams, born of illustrious parents, laid in the lap of wealth, dandled on the knee of nobles, and educated in foreign lands in the midst of luxuries and far from war's alarms, imbibing in his very infancy, and confirming it in his approach to manhood, the principles of aristocracy and monarchy.

Later the Argus editorialized that while abroad Adams had "admired the structure of kingly governments" and speculated in Russian stocks.[76]

A closer look at press functioning on another issue, the irrepressible "bargain and sale" controversy, will further illustrate the role of Kendall and other journalists in this partisan national news network.

Remini has shown how Jackson's own view of the Clay-Adams coalition changed during the course of Jackson's journey from Washington to Nashville in the summer of 1825. Jackson had started with a "suspicion" and ended with a "conviction" that he had been "betrayed, abused and cheated...not

himself alone, but the people, too."[77] Thereafter, politicians who visited him at the Hermitage "he chilled with a dramatic account of the dark deed," and he "charged into the public prints whenever he could lash the coalition with sharp words."[78]

The conduct of a widespread editorial strategy of bombarding the administration with the "bargain and sale" charge appears to have begun with a full page editorial in the March 27, 1826, United States Telegraph.[79] In a speech three days later, Sen. John Randolph of Virginia, an administration opponent, excoriated the "coalition of Blifil and Black George...of the Puritan with the black-leg." This defamation caused Clay to challenge Randolph to a duel, which ended with neither man injured.[80] But the duel did not stop the clamor about intrigue.

The one serious blunder committed by the Jacksonians in their "bargain and sale" campaign set in motion a series of events which ultimately was to result in embarrassment for Clay and Adams in Kentucky.

Remembering that James Buchanan had approached him in 1825 with a confused proposal about a bargain with Clay, contingent upon Adams' removal from the State Department, Jackson instructed Duff Green of the United States Telegraph to contact Buchanan for confirmation that he had acted on Clay's instructions. Buchanan wrote Green that he had had no such authorization and requested that the incident be forgotten, a disclaimer that Green accepted.[81] But Jackson continued to tell his story; and one visitor to the Hermitage, Carter Beverly of Virginia, published in the Fayetteville (N. C.) Observer an account of a conversation in which Jackson had said Clay would have dealt with him in 1825. When the Observer report began to go the rounds of the other papers, Clay challenged Beverly, saying he did not believe Jackson would say such a thing. Beverly wrote to ask Jackson to back him; and on June 5, 1827, Jackson wrote Beverly to confirm the essence of their conver-

sation. Now Beverly sent Jackson's letter to the Telegraph, which published it. On July 4 Clay sent a letter to the Kentucky Reporter publicly demanding that the general name the persons alleged to have been Clay's emissaries. Jackson named Buchanan in a letter published in the Telegraph on July 18. "Old Hickory" had taken the precaution of writing Buchanan on July 15 to "strongly suggest" that he confirm Jackson's version of the story. But on Aug. 8, in a letter published in the Lancaster (Pa.) Journal, Buchanan conceded that he had acted "as his own agent."[82]

At this point Kendall made his first known personal communication with Jackson. In a letter of Aug. 22, Kendall wrote:

> Although I have never had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you there are some circumstances of a peculiar nature which now induce me to address you. I am one of those who were told by one of his [Clay's] friends, as I think about the 20th day of January 1825, that if Mr. Adams should be elected he would make Mr. Clay his Secretary of State and I was three times solicited to write to Mr. [David] White, our representative, to vote for Mr. Adams on that account. Thus urged I did write.[83]

In a second letter (Aug. 27), Kendall told Jackson:

> Buchanan's statement has been received here by the Adams men with much exultation but their joy has very much abated. "Sweet in the mouth," they find this document, "but bitter in the belly."[84]

Although Jackson was convinced he could prove Buchanan's "recollection had materially failed him," he accepted the advice of Van Buren and others that he remain silent and let Duff Green and the other editors try to salvage something of the situation from Buchanan's obvious reluctance to dispute the general.[85]

Clay now saw the chance to capitalize politically on the Buchanan blunder and to end the "bargain and sale" charge once and for all. He collected testimony from people who he claimed knew how he had intended to vote before he had come to Washington and met with Adams on Jan. 9, 1825.

These letters he published in a 61-page pamphlet[86], copies of which reached the Kentucky legislature near the time for its adjournment. Clay supporters in the state senate tried to pass a set of resolutions claiming the pamphlet had exonerated their man; the Jackson faction, sensing it could not defeat these resolutions, called instead for an investigation by the senate into the question of whether Adams and Clay had struck a bargain.[87] The Clay supporters agreed to an investigation to be held in January 1828--and they were to regret it. "Your friends allowed themselves to be goaded and precipitated into the measure without much reflection," a Clay correspondent later lamented.[88] Apparently no one ever informed Clay that the proceedings--his trial, as Clay later was to call them--were to be held.[89]

During the four-day investigation, sworn testimony was taken from 17 witnesses, including Kendall and Blair. Three major facts appeared: first, that Clay had paid for the republication of the Argus' anti-Adams letters of 1822 and 1823--for which Kendall now claimed authorship; second, that Rep. White had voted for Adams in February 1825 because he had been assured that to do so would help make Clay secretary of state; and third, that Blair had Clay's letter of Jan. 8, 1825, in which Clay had discussed his position in regard to the rival candidates.[90]

Blair refused to testify as to the contents of the letter, which allowed Clay's enemies to contend that the contents confirmed Clay's guilt in the bargain matter. The publication of the letter might have helped stifle the cries about "bargain and sale" in the remaining months of the campaign, but Clay mysteriously would not allow publication.[91] (The opposition press, led by the Argus, subsequently demanded that the letter be published. Finally Clay agreed to allow the Administration Central Committee of Kentucky to show to any individual who asked it the parts of the Blair letter that dealt with the 1825 election. Kendall saw them and published excerpts in

the Argus July 16, Aug.13 and 20, 1828 with viciously misleading comments. Blair, who claimed his conduct had always been motivated by his friendship for Clay, vowed that he had not authorized the use of the letters in the Argus; and Clay replied that he was satisfied with Blair's behavior.[92])

The investigation completed, the Jackson men tacked onto the original senate resolutions an amendment stating that all Kendall's charges against Adams in the 1822-23 letters had been false. The amendment was voted down and the original resolutions passed. But this enabled the Central Jackson Committee of Kentucky to disseminate the following claim:

> If the administration faction voted for the amendment, with the evidence before them that Mr. Clay had himself circulated these charges and paid for their circulation, they would vote he was a slanderer and libeller. If they voted against it they would vote Adams was an enemy of the West, ready to sell its blood! In this predicament they divided; some voted that Clay was a libeller, and others that Adams was a knave; but the amendment was rejected by the casting vote of the lieutenant governor. This shows that the party cares nothing for Mr. Adams; they will vote him a knave when he stands alone, but an honest man when connected with Mr. Clay.[93]

Kendall's attacks on Clay became so regular and vituperative[94] that the pro-administration press attacked Kendall as the man who wrote for the most pay. Why had he not informed the public of Clay's intrigues when he first knew of them? demanded the Kentuckian, a Clay paper. Kendall "should be disrobed and exposed in his natural deformity and pristine nudity....Oh, Amos! Amos!....Repent ye--repent ye."[95] The Kentuckian also accused the Lexington Gazette of being conducted by a junto of knaves who had employed a former associate of Kendall to carry out villainies against Clay.[96] Both the Argus and the Gazette fired editorial blasts back at the Kentuckian, thereby opening another spirited pen war in which the level of invective quickly plummeted. Soon, for example, the Kentuckian savaged Kendall as

a "reptile, scavenger and dog."[97]

With personal invective dominating the campaign from start to finish, "not a single basic issue of American foreign or domestic policy was placed clearly before the electorate."[98] Indeed, the only issue of any substance to be broached was the Jacksonians' charge of waste of public money by the administration. The Argus on July 9, 1828, reprinted a reply to its earlier charge which pointed out that the average yearly expenditure of the government under Adams had been more than $1 million less than under Monroe and that between 1824 and 1828 the public debt had been reduced by almost as much as during the previous 10 years.[99]

Jackson was attacked by the administration press as being a willful liar, a blasphemer, a barroom brawler, a slave trader, an illiterate. He was accused of having padded his expense accounts while he was governor of Florida, of having engaged in fraudulent speculation, of having voted for aristocratic provisions in the Tennessee constitution, of having advocated a tenfold increase in the standing army. He was said to have slandered Kentucky troops at the Battle of New Orleans and to have executed six militia men who Jackson claimed had deserted even though their enlistments had actually expired. It was argued that Jackson had lived for years in adultery with his wife, who had neglected to obtain a divorce from her first husband. Incredibly, it was also charged that Jackson was the son of an English prostitute and a Carolina mulatto, and that one of his brothers had been sold into slavery.[100]

But as the election day approached, even Clay had to admit that his own all-out campaigning, with his own vindication as part of the stakes, was to fail. He wrote his son, "General Jackson, without doubt, will be elected. He will obtain the votes of Kentucky and Ohio, and perhaps of Indiana also. I consider the question as decided."[101] 21

Jackson won Kentucky with 39,394 votes to 31,460 for Adams. Nationally, Jackson received 178 electoral votes to 83 for Adams. All of the Southern and Western states and a sizable majority in the Middle Atlantic states went for "Old Hickory," while New England, except for one Jackson vote in Maine, held firm for Adams.[102]

At Jackson's invitation, Kendall and several other of "Old Hickory's" editors went to Washington in January 1829 to become part of the new government. Although some of the more traditionalist members of his own party were to object to his nominations of journalists for government positions, Jackson justified himself by writing:

> Those [editors] who stept [sic] forward and advocated the question termed the side of the people, were a part of the people, and differing only in this that they were the proprietors and conductors of the press--in many cases purchased by themselves expressly for the purpose of aiding in the "grand cause." And to what motive other than the love of country and the exercise of a sound judgment could their course be ascribed?....Why should this class of citizens by excluded from offices to which others, not more patriotic, nor presenting stronger claims as to qualifications may aspire?[103]

Adams, in his turn, complained that:

> The appointments, almost without exception, are conferred upon the vilest purveyors of slander during the late electioneering campaign, and an excessive disproportion of places is given to editors of the foulest presses....The appointments are exclusively of violent partisans; and every editor of a scurrilous and slanderous newspaper is provided for.[104]

In conclusion, although it cannot be said with certainty that the Argus was the most influential newspaper for Jackson in the West, it is obvious that "Old Hickory's" triumph in Kentucky would have been much more problematic if Kendall had been removed from the fray in its early stages--perhaps, to a government clerk's desk in Washington.

Kendall's shift from support of Clay to Jackson certainly seems pragmatic in the vulgar sense, and his newspaper's performance seems today to

exemplify "the worst days of propagandizing"[105] in this era of American journalism. In a more positive evaluation, however, Cutlip and Center attribute to Kendall "a sure sense of mass psychology and an ability to communicate complex ideas in the plain language of the frontier....Kendall carefully analyzed newspaper comment and content and sensitively gauged the public temper. Jackson drew much of his strength from the people by offering ideas congenial to them. Kendall took care to find out what the people wanted."[106] At any rate, Kendall always argued that he acted as he did out of his belief in democratic principles, not out of loyalty to any politician. Jackson so happened to be the embodiment of those principles, which were summarized later in the motto of the administration newspaper, the Globe: "The world is governed too much."[107]

FOOTNOTES

[1]John Tebbel, The Compact History of the American Newspaper (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., Publishers, 1969), p. 84.

[2]Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America, An Interpretative History of the Mass Media, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 114.

[3]See, for example, Marquis James, The Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1938); Charles Kerr, ed., History of Kentucky, Vol. II (New York: The American Historical Society, 1922); Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1963); and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Age of Jackson (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1945).

[4]William Stickney, ed., Autobiography of Amos Kendall (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), p. 113. Note: The book contains little original material by Kendall. It does have some of his early diary entries and a few of his newspaper articles, but it is dominated by Stickney's reminiscences of his uncle, Kendall. The author of the present study found the book to be of limited value.

[5]Ibid., p. 172.

[6]Ibid., pp. 113, 142.

[7]Claude G. Bowers, The Party Battles of the Jackson Period (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), p. 146.

[8]Stickney, p. 175.

[9]"The Clay-Kendall relationship is narrated at great length in a letter published in the 'Extra' United States Telegraph, July 26, 1828." (Author's note.) Remini, p. 82.

[10]Remini, pp. 15-16.

[11]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Life of Henry Clay (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1937), pp. 111-113.

[12]Stickney, pp. 148-149; Schlesinger, p. 68.

[13]Van Deusen, p. 154.

[14]Arndt M. Stickles, The Critical Court Struggle in Kentucky, 1819-1829 (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Graduate Council, 1929), p. 18.

[15]Stickney, pp. 206-224.

[16]Van Deusen, p. 153.

[17]Ibid., p. 156.

[18]The field was reduced in 1822 when Calhoun decided to concentrate on the vice presidency.

[19]Van Deusen, pp. 103-106.

[20]Kendall was to testify in 1828 that he was the author, but his feud with Clay made his claim subject to reasonable doubt.

[21]Letters to John Quincy Adams Relative to the Fisheries and the Mississippi, first published in the Argus of Western America, revised and enlarged by Amos Kendall, 1823.

[22]Van Deusen, p. 170; Kerr, pp. 686-687.

[23]The sheriffs who brought their counties' state election votes to Frankfort in August 1824 were polled as to their presidential preferences: Clay was their first choice by 53 votes to nine for Jackson and two for Adams, and Jackson was their second choice by 31 votes to 20 for Adams and 17 for Crawford. (Kerr, p. 676)

[24]Kerr, p. 677. Quoted in Niles Register, Vol. 26, pp. 194-195.

[25]Stickles, pp. 22-25.

[26]Ibid., pp. 30-36.

[27]Ibid., p. 51.

[28]Kendall to Clay, June 20, 1822, in Van Deusen, p. 158.

[29]Remini, pp. 12-15.

[30]Van Deusen, p. 187.

[31]Ibid., p. 186; James, p. 461.

[32]Kerr, pp. 674-675; Van Deusen, pp. 182-184; Remini, pp. 13-16.

[33]Clay to Blair, Jan. 8, 1825, in Van Deusen, p. 185.

[34]Charles Francis Adams, ed., Memoirs of John Quincy Adams (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1876), VI, 464-465; Van Deusen, p. 186.

[35]Van Deusen, p. 186.

[36]Remini, pp. 22-23.

[37]Leonard P. Curry, "Election Year--Kentucky 1828," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 55 (1957), 196.

[38]Remini, p. 25; Van Deusen, p. 192.

[39]Remini, p. 26.

[40]Ibid., p. 25.

[41]Stickles, p. 110.

[42]Remini, p. 29.

[43]James, p. 444. Kendall proposed to keep the Argus neutral during

Adams administration, but this strategy was to come under increasing criticism from his "New Court" friends.

[44]Kerr, p. 681.

[45]Stickles, p. 72.

[46]Ibid.

[47]The absurdity of the situation did not escape the notice of out-of-state newspapers. When the National Intelligencer, the federal executive organ, editorialized about the confusion, the Argus replied that "the Intelligencer is not our hornbook, nor [Joseph] Gales and [William] Seaton [publishers of the paper] our teachers." (National Intelligencer, May 10, 1825, in William E. Smith, The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics [New York: Macmillan, 1933], I, 39.)

[48]Stickles, p. 97.

[49]Kendall to Clay, April 28, 1825, in Van Deusen, p. 217.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Van Deusen, p. 217.

[52]Ibid.; Remini, p. 82.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Desha to Kendall, April 9, 1831, in James A. Padgett, ed., "Correspondence between Governor Joseph Desha and Amos Kendall--1831-1835," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 38 (1940), 14.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Remini, p. 82.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Johnson to Van Buren, Sept. 22, 1827; Kendall to Van Buren, Nov. 10, 1827, in Remini, p. 82.

[59]Remini, p. 36.

[60]See especially Remini. Other valuable treatments are in James; John S. Bassett, The Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: Macmillan, 1931); and James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1859).

[61]Remini, p. 61.

[62]Ibid., pp. 73ff.; Kerr, pp. 682-683.

[63]Remini, p. 76.

[64]Ibid., p. 79.

[65]Ibid., p. 77.

[66]Maj. Allan Campbell to Jackson, Feb. 4, 1827, in Remini, p. 88, and Curry, p. 197.

[67]Argus of Western America, May 23, 1827. Blair was a member of the committee.

[68]Kerr, p. 683; Remini, p. 150. On the national level, the United States Telegraph published, by Erik Eriksson's count, more than 80 such assemblages in the various states in 1827 and 1828; these events the newspaper described as "Signs of the Times" and "Movements of the People." (Erik McK. Eriksson, "Official Newspaper Organs and the Presidential Elections of 1828, 1832 and 1836," Tennessee Historical Magazine, 8 [January 1925], p. 235) Naturally the Jacksonians claimed their meetings were always packed because their candidate represented "the people," and just as naturally such claims invited scornful comments from the Adams newspapers.

[69]Argus of Western America, Oct. 31, 1827.

[70]Curry, pp. 199-200; Kerr, pp. 683, 685-686. On Jan. 8, 1828, the Kentucky legislature refused to order the firing of cannon as part of the traditional commemoration of the Battle of New Orleans.

[71]James, p. 462.

[72]Remini, pp. 102-103.

[73]Curry, p. 198.

[74]See, for example, the Argus of Western America, Aug. 20, 1828.

[75]Remini, p. 117.

[76]Argus of Western America, Aug. 20, 1828.

[77]Remini, p. 29.

[78]Ibid., pp. 65, 67.

[79]Van Deusen, p. 219.

[80]Ibid., pp. 220-222.

[81]Remini, p. 65; James, p. 458.

[82]James, pp. 458-461; Van Deusen, pp. 224-225.

[83]Kendall to Jackson, Aug, 22, 1827, in James, p. 461. The statement was somewhat at variance with an earlier article in the Argus (April 25, 1827), which said: "I will not accuse Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay of a corrupt bargain and sale...but I do say, that it was clearly understood between Mr. Clay's and Mr. Adams' friends, that if Mr. Clay supported Mr. Adams, Mr. Adams would make him Secretary of State."

[84]Kendall to Jackson, Aug. 27, 1827, in James, p. 461.

[85]James, p. 462; Remini, p. 66.

[86]An Address of Henry Clay to the Public, containing Certain Testimony in Refutation of the Charges made against him by General Andrew Jackson touching the Last Presidential Election.

[87]Remini credits Kendall with originating the idea for the investigation, but he offers no evidence for the assertion.

[88]John J. Crittenden to Clay, March 4, 1828, in Remini, p. 163.

[89]Smith, p. 43.

[90]Van Deusen, p. 225.

[91]Van Deusen, p. 226; Smith, p. 44.

[92]Ibid. In his diary, June 6, 1828, President Adams noted that Clay had sent him three of Kendall's letters which would show Kendall to be "a liar" on the bargain and sale charge. "Kendall is one of those authors to be let, whose profligacy is the child of his poverty," Adams commented. (Adams Memoirs, VIII, p. 28)

[93]Kerr, p. 687. Address to the People of Kentucky by the Central Jackson Committee of Kentucky.

[94]For example, on Sept. 24, 1828, he accused Clay of having cheated two carpenters out of their wages, of kidnapping a free Negro in Pennyslvania and taking him to Kentucky, of treasonable connections with Aaron Burr, and of a design to separate the West from the Union.

[95]Kentuckian, April 28, July 31, 1828, in Smith, p. 46.

[96]Kentuckian, May 15, 1828, in Smith, p. 46.

[97]Smith, p. 46.

[98]Curry, p. 206.

[99]Ibid. The Argus' article was printed July 3, 1828.

[100]See Curry, pp. 199-206; Van Deusen, p.227; and Remini, pp. 114-120.

[101]Clay to Henry Clay Jr., Nov. 14, 1828, in Van Deusen, p. 229.

[102]Curry, p. 207.

[103]Jackson to Z. L. Miller, May 13, 1829, in Bassett, p. 450.

[104]Quoted in Tebbel, p. 85.

[105]Tebbel, p. 85.

[106]Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), pp. 20-21.

[107]Smith, pp. 113-116.